

Amendments to the Specification:

Please add the following section, on a separate sheet, after the Claims section of the application:

--ABSTRACT

--A laparoscopic bipolar electrosurgical instrument for sealing tissue is disclosed. The instrument includes a handle having an elongated tube, and first and second jaw members attached to a distal end of the tube. The jaw members are movable from a first position for approximating tissue to at least one subsequent position for grasping tissue therebetween. Each of the jaw members includes an electrically conductive sealing surface. The instrument also includes means for connecting the jaw members to a source of electrosurgical energy, a stop for maintaining a minimum separation distance, and means for maintaining a closure force. The means for connecting includes a pushrod for connecting the first jaw member to a source of electrosurgical energy.--